



For Clippers’ Schnacke, uncertainty rules day

SPORTS, C1

The Columbus Dispatch

Wednesday, March 18, 2020  Get the Dispatch on mobile | [dispatch.com](https://www.dispatch.com) | \$3

Direct checks to Americans possible

Lisa Mascaro and Zeke Miller
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is asking Congress to unleash a torrent of emergency economic aid — including direct checks to Americans — to shore up households and the economy amid the coronavirus crisis.

In an effort unseen since the Great Recession, Trump wants checks out to the public within two weeks as part of what officials said could approach a \$1 trillion package. Congressional leaders vowed swift action. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin appeared on Capitol Hill to brief Senate Republicans.

“We want to go big,” Trump said at a White House briefing. “We want to get

it done and have a big infusion.”

He also said: “If we do this right, our country and the world, frankly, but our country can be rolling again pretty quickly.”

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell promised the Senate would not adjourn until the package is passed.

“Obviously, we need to act,” McConnell said after meeting White House officials at the Capitol.

But first, McConnell said, the Senate will vote on the House’s \$100 billion package of sick pay, emergency food and free testing that’s on track for Trump’s signature.



Mnuchin

Inside & online

More on the virus: **A2, A3, A9, A12-13, B1, B4, B6, C1-2**

- As a public service, virus coverage on **Dispatch.com** is presented at no charge.

After a savage drop at the start of the week, the stock market rose during Trump’s briefing as he and aides sketched out elements of the economic rescue package.

Investors have been waiting for Washington to offer more aid for the economy. After flipping between gains and losses Tuesday morning, stocks turned decisively higher after the Fed-

eral Reserve revived a program first used in the 2008 financial crisis to help companies get access to cash for very short-term needs.

The Dow Jones industrial average finished up more than 1,000 points, while the S&P 500 rose 6 percent, rebounding from a 12 percent collapse on Monday, which was its steepest drop since 1987.

Early trading was unsteady, but stocks surged after Federal Reserve said it would use its emergency lending powers to try to keep credit flowing to households and businesses by buying up commercial paper.

The Federal Reserve said it would begin buying up a type of short-term debt

See CHECKS, Page A10

VIRUS OR VOTING? IT WAS NO CONTEST



A man who had planned to vote in the scheduled Ohio primary election stands outside a closed polling place Tuesday at the Schiller Park Community Center in German Village. Late Monday night, after a legal back-and-forth, Dr. Amy Acton, head of the Ohio Department of Public Health, ordered all polling locations closed Tuesday due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [JOSHUA A. BICKEL/DISPATCH]

Ohio officials who postponed primary get lawsuits they expected

Rick Rouan and Randy Ludlow
The Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

State government leaders were prepared for a legal battle, and they got it, over the last-minute decision late Monday to postpone Ohio’s primary election because of concerns about the spread of COVID-19.

The Ohio Democratic Party and Kira Sanders, a Reynoldsburg woman, filed suit against Secretary of State Frank LaRose in the Ohio Supreme Court late Tuesday afternoon, arguing that only lawmakers — not LaRose — could set an election date.

The litigation contends there should not be another primary Election Day, just an extension of absentee balloting until late April.

LaRose had no authority to send a directive to county boards of elections moving Tuesday’s scuttled election to June 2, and that directive should be rescinded, the filing says.

His “reliance upon factual findings

and declarations of the Ohio governor and the director of the Ohio Department of Health to assert jurisdiction to move the date of Ohio’s 2020 presidential primary election ... was a quasijudicial act unauthorized by law,” the suit says.

“We are entering a more difficult time. We are going to have more and more of our citizens who become ill. We need to allow those citizens who become ill to be able to have the opportunity to vote. The longer we can spread that time out, the better that is.”

Mike DeWine
Governor

The action asks the high court to order “adequate” opportunities for Ohioans to vote via absentee ballot by April 28.

“The main intent is to allow the primary to continue and preserve it,” said Ohio Democratic Chairman David Pepper. “There are folks out there saying no more votes should be counted after today’s non-primary and that would be a complete injustice.”

Many members of the General Assembly have raised similar questions about LaRose’s authority. Members plan to reconvene next week to officially set a new election date.

State Rep. Jason Stephens, R-Kitts Hill, sought Tuesday to intervene in the now-appealed lawsuit filed Monday evening trying to halt the Tuesday election, arguing only the legislature — not LaRose — can set an election date.

“My client would say the General Assembly is ready and willing to fix the problem they didn’t create,” said Don Brey, a veteran Columbus elections lawyer. “You can’t have executive offices changing the law willy-nilly or finding a judge who will do it on the fly.”

See ELECTION, Page A4

Ohio halts elective surgeries

Max Filby The Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

Gov. Mike DeWine and the state health director ordered all hospitals Tuesday to postpone elective surgeries to make sure Ohio has enough resources to handle a spike in coronavirus cases.

DeWine said he is worried about not having enough beds, ventilators and protective equipment for medical professionals.

“You don’t want to deny someone a surgery that is needed, that’s the last thing anyone wants to do,” DeWine said. “On the other hand, if we can postpone some that are elective then we save the equipment (and) we save the protection. We also, depending on what the surgery is, may save a bed.”

There were 67 Ohioans who had tested positive for coronavirus as of Tuesday afternoon, including a second case in Columbus, according to the state Health Department.

See SURGERIES, Page A5

Bay Area experiences lockdown

Tim Sullivan and Chris Rugaber
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nearly 7 million people in the San Francisco area were all but confined to their homes Tuesday, while Florida put a damper on spring break and St. Patrick’s Day by ordering the closing of all bars as state and local officials took an increasingly hard line against the coronavirus.

Ohio canceled its presidential primary hours before the polls were to open, but three other states pressed ahead with their elections, recommending such precautions as putting tape on the floor to keep voters a safe distance apart.

Officials in six San Francisco Bay Area counties issued a “shelter-in-place” order that went into effect

See LOCKDOWN, Page A10

Holiday not overlooked
The spirit of St. Patrick was evident despite chaos, **A2, B1.**

Making ends meet
Virus scare may require families to stretch budgets for food, **B6.**

Weather
High 59 | Low 53
Forecast, B14

Volume 149 | Issue 261
Home delivery pricing inside
Subscribe 1-877-734-7728
© Gannett Co., Inc. 2020

